

Aktum.

FOR EVERYONE WORKING AT UMEÅ UNIVERSITY • MARCH 2017 • NO 1

THEME *Doctoral education*

The best and the worst of times

Panel of doctoral students share their thoughts • No doctoral education crisis – but noticeable cost increase • Five third-cycle subject areas in the UKÄ evaluation

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Pelle Snickars
Media professor with
a broad field of work

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Fancy, culinary and
scholarly at the
University Restaurant

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Getting rid of shares
in fossil fuels in an
effort to divest

Debate

Long way to go
before becoming
a Sami university



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

The Under-Represented

I FLICK THROUGH the Aktum binders, passed down from my predecessors as editor-in-chief. Apart from raising some general reflections over the lapse of time, the magazine also acts as an illustration of how under-represented the university doctoral students tend to be.

The notion of what is emphasised and what is marginalised holds importance. Finding doctoral students in no man's land between student and employee becomes an evident problem if that leads to insecure and blurred conditions, ultimately impairing the prospects for applying oneself to the training and performing a high-quality doctoral dissertation.

On second thought, though, the invisibility and vague distinctions in doctoral studentships are in many ways perfectly logical and reasonable. Doctoral education is in its essence a transition. The task of the doctoral student is to reinvent herself as a researcher. This process can be more or less controlled, more or less nested within a research team and a pre-defined project – but the decisive leap from being a student to becoming a researcher is something the doctoral student needs to take alone. Outside support and appreciation is essential. But it seems to me that doctoral studies probably need to contain a fair bit of introspection to be fully effective.

I'm grateful for the insights and opinions shared by Per Boström, Tora Dunås and Jakub Krzywda in a discussion starting on page 8. All of the approximately 600 doctoral students affiliated to Umeå University are worthy of respect. That is, those who are courageous enough (or foolhardy, if you may) to embark on this kind of long and inwardly journey that a doctoral studentship tends to be. When many of the rest of us hurry off towards goals far more short-sighted and mundane, their task is to take themselves and their hypotheses very seriously.

Both aspects are needed. But the latter is what makes us a university. ●

“Doctoral education is in its essence a transition. The task of the doctoral student is to reinvent herself as a researcher.”



JONAS LIDSTRÖM
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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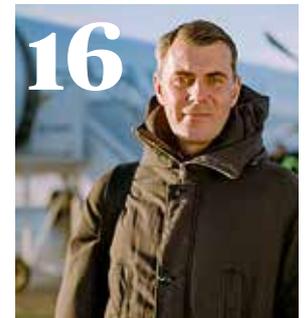
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www.aurora.umu.se

On the intranet Aurora, you will find the latest news for people working at Umeå University.



Hi there!

Petra Svanborg, IT coordinator at the Medical Library



Petra Svanborg at the Medical Library. In the background, an introduction to the software 3D Sketch is being held together with Medical technology, research and development at the University Hospital of Umeå.

An experimental workshop for medical makers

3D printing technology is becoming increasingly common in health care, and the future possibilities are breathtaking. The Medical Library was quick to offer access to 3D printers. Today, it has more than one hundred certified users.

TEXT: Jonas Lidström **PHOTO:** Barbro Johansson

How did the Medical Library come to acquire two 3D printers?

“3D printing technology is becoming increasingly common in health care. We wanted to see if students could benefit from using the technology. But it has proved of great interest to hospital personnel, too, because the technology is becoming accepted in more of the hospital’s clinics. Our 3D printers are relatively simple, but the principles are the same as when you print prosthesis.”

Does this initiative relate to the new focus environment that has been established in connection with the Medical Library?

“Not really. I came in contact with the technology when I visited the inauguration of Sliperiet in the autumn of 2014. As soon as I walked in there and saw their 3D lab, I thought that this was something that we at the Medical Library should offer as well. I mentioned this to a colleague, who in turn had read articles about libraries in the United States that had started working with 3D printers. Together we brainstormed a pilot



For example, it is quite common for students to print anatomical models that can be downloaded free online.

project. Now we’re looking at the second year, and we’ll see if the project can continue after 2017. Personally, I hope so.”

In what concrete ways do you teach 3D printing technology?

“Partly by presenting periodic lectures on ‘3D printing in an hour’. Then we conduct personal workshops with all who are interested. After the workshop, you receive a cer-

tificate that entitles you to book a 3D printer here and make prints. We also have recently started offering courses in a computer program used to construct 3D models. We do this in collaboration with biomedical engineering and R&D here in the hospital.”

How unusual is it to have a 3D printer corner in a library?

“In a library context, we have received quite a lot of attention for the project and have been invited to present the project at conferences and such. Other libraries have gotten in touch with us, wanting to emulate what we have built here.”

What determines whether the project will be a long-term part of the Medical Library’s offerings?

“I haven’t looked into what it would cost at all. But in a sense this course of action entails a redefinition of what a library is and can be. It’s not obvious that we should offer access to 3D printers here, but personally I think it’s something that is becoming more and more common. A library has many advantages in this context: It often has ample hours of operation and is available to all.”

How would you like to take this further if you had free rein?

“Today, the library is about books and computers to a large extent. But might it be possible to also build up a full-scale makerspace with 3D printers, motion capture technology and access to software for creativity in future? I want to believe that myself, but of course it’s a much bigger issue than that.” ●



Björn Norén and Ute Walter are deputy director and director of the Umeå University School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts.

Full speed ahead for gastronomy research

The Umeå University School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts has opened its new research restaurant. There, students at the Gastronomy Programme and a budding research operation will be offered entirely new opportunities.

THE NEW RESEARCH restaurant will, in many ways, be the heart of the School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts. It is situated level 3 in the Teacher Education Building in the corner diagonally across from the old educational restaurant – a familiar place for anyone who has enjoyed a meal at the temporary restaurant that the gastronomy students run as a part of their education.

VISITING THE PREMISES a few days before the grand opening, the kitchen certainly draws attention to itself with its stainless-steel surfaces and its high-technology equipment. Although, director and senior lecturer Ute Walter and deputy director and lecturer Björn Norén point out that the dining area makes up just as a unique resource to the infrastructure:

“What’s completely new is the audio-visual system that allows us to study roles and behaviour in the dining area and in the kitchen afterwards, both for educational and research purposes,” says Björn Norén.

“Then, we will be able to create subsections of the room using thick drapes, creating four dining rooms. Consequently, the kitchen is laid out to allow for four separate teams to work side by side as well. It gives us an incredible flexibility and freedom,” he continues.

“In this programme, we want to lead by integrating practical workmanship with science.”

It was in 2013 that the Umeå University School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts revised its offering of study programmes and courses – by ditching previous programmes in favour of a single one: The Gastronomy Programme.

“The great change in the course syllabus was made nearly four years ago, but it’s not until now that we have premises that allow us to fully carry out the educational concept. The Gastronomy Programme is based upon two main perspectives on gastronomy: Creative cooking and hosting. In the Research restaurant, these parts can be allowed to naturally and seamlessly join one another,” says Ute Walter.

THE GRAND OPENING of the Research restaurant also constitutes a milestone in the School’s journey towards an operation with increased academic weight.

“We already have two doctoral students, one is already employed and one will come. We are also close to recruiting a professor, and a new lecturer has recently been employed,” says Ute Walter.

“The theoretical features of the education create opportunities for students to work in a norm-breaking and innovative way,” she says.

At the opening, many highly noted guests and speakers were present. Gert Klötzke, honorary doctor at Umeå University, and Carl-Jan Granqvist, honorary doctor at Örebro University, were just two of the names at the inauguration.

“In this programme, we want to lead by integrating practical workmanship with science. Our research applies a multidisciplinary way of working and close collaborations with actors in the gastronomical field and in the academia are important elements in our work. For instance, we have close cooperation with the School of Hospitality, Culinary Arts and Meal Science at Örebro University and Grythyttan in both undergraduate education, doctoral education and research.”

AT A TIME WHEN gastronomy is constantly expanding and has been given a clear cultural status, it is easy to see the value in close collaborations with the business sector for a gastronomic education with focus on workmanship and innovation. But Björn Norén suggests that it is a mutual exchange of knowledge.

“At the University, the School of Restaurant and Culinary Arts represents a relatively young field, but also in comparison to the restaurant industry, we signify a young perspective. The research conducted here, can help the sector move to the next level. Even if the sector can be considered advanced and creative, it’s rather stagnant in other ways,” says Björn Norén. ●

JONAS LIDSTRÖM



PHOTO: PER MELANDER

Take a Swedish course

SWEDISH FOR ACADEMICS is a series of courses offered for international members of staff at Umeå University who want to learn Swedish in an academic context. The next application round is opening in April. Read more by entering *Swedish courses* in the search box on aurora.umu.se/en.

Thumbs up from international students

YET AGAIN, UMEÅ UNIVERSITY scores highly in the International Student Barometer, a survey measuring student satisfaction regarding studies and everyday life at the University and in the town they live. The overall average of all main categories puts Umeå University at third place in Sweden and fifth place in Europe.

Compared to last year, we have dropped a few positions: Then, Umeå University was number one among all institutions of higher education in Europe, and hence also in Sweden.

Figuratively speaking → Erik Domellöf



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EMPLOYEES have so far chosen English as their preferred language for information from Umeå University. Are you one of these? Thanks for contributing. If not, and you would like easier access to information in English, please go to *Language settings* on aurora.umu.se/en to set your language preference.



English pamphlet on Umeå University

FOR THOSE WHO welcome international guests, there is now a printed 16-page pamphlet available titled *This is Umeå University*. Using pictures, numbers and brief texts, it provides an overview of the University and the research and education conducted here. If you are interested in ordering some copies, please contact the Communications Office.



Ending all investments in fossil fuels

Umeå University, the fourth largest institution of higher education in Sweden, has decided to end all investments in companies that produce, process or distribute coal, oil or gas, the so-called fossil fuels.

TEXT: Ester Roos-Engstrand

AT THE END OF December, the University Budget Committee decided that all investments by the University's foundations shall be fossil-free. Per Ragnarsson, deputy university director, budget director and general rapporteur for the Budget Committee, was present when the decision was made.

"It's a wise decision and shows what Umeå University stands for. Our credibility is important," says Per Ragnarsson.

He asserts that it is a step in the right direction for Umeå University and that it is in line with the focus on the Arctic theme year.

SINCE 2011, THERE has been a global campaign for a fossil-free environment, for divestment. The 'Fossil-Free' campaign started in the United States and has since spread

around the world. In Sweden 'Fossil-Free' prevails from Malmö in the south to Luleå in the north. The campaign calls on institutions to divest from fossil energy and is directed at large organisations such as municipalities and universities that may have large holdings. At Umeå University there are also student activists, although not to the same extent as in Lund and Stockholm. Students there have mounted campaigns with petition drives and demonstrated for



Facts: Divesting

'Divesting from' is the opposite of 'investing in'. It is about selling stocks, funds or other investments that are unethical or morally questionable.

Source: Fossil Free Sweden

The Swedish Fossil Free movement is a part of the global network 350.org that runs campaigns and lobby work towards companies, authorities and organisations around the globe. The picture was taken at a manifestation in Melbourne, Australia.

Niklas Edeborg, in charge of the campaign 'Fossil Free Umeå University', at the booth on Whole Earth Day.



divestment on the part of the universities. Things have been quieter at Umeå University. A group of students from 'Fossil-Free Umeå University' took part in 'Whole Earth Day' with a booth, and close to a hundred students have today signed the petition for a fossil-free university.

Christian Tengblad, who works as coordinator of the 'Fossil-Free Sweden' organisation, believes that Umeå University divestment is part of a larger change:

"The situation is urgent and we have to reconfigure the economy. It's fossil-dependent now," he says.

CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF Technology, Stockholm University and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences have already committed to being fossil-free institutions of higher education. Lund University has done away with parts of its holdings in companies that deal with fossil energy. Municipalities such as Örebro, Uppsala, Strömstad, Malmö, Stockholm and Borås and organisations such as the Church of Sweden and Region Östergötland have also implemented the change.

The initiative to make Umeå University a fossil-free university was introduced by

Vice-Chancellor Hans Adolfsson in early December last year, and it was approved by the Budget Committee at the end of the month. Rarely has a decision been made so quickly. By the turn of the year, Umeå University was fossil-free, except for a small part managed by SEB, where it is not yet entirely clear that the change has been implemented. Per Ragnarsson explains the rapid progress by the fact that Umeå University had very little fossil fuel investments. Only 0.23% of the foundation's investments were placed in companies producing fossil fuels. These were all in the same fund, namely 'Öhman Ethical Emerging Market'. That fund has now been discontinued, and instead the investments have been placed in fossil-free funds: 'Öhman Global Sustainable' and 'Öhman Sweden Sustainable'.

THE FACT THAT the University deals with funds, shares and interest-bearing paper might sound curious. But donations to the University are what make up the foundations. For Umeå University, there are about 36 associated foundations involved, the largest of which is the School of Business and Economics Fund. The foundations' yields are distributed primarily to research. All in

all SEK 200 million are under management, an amount that is small in comparison with larger universities such as Lund and Uppsala. Umeå University's funds are managed today largely by asset manager 'E. Öhman J:or Wealth Management AB', which already has implemented the exchange of the funds. Over and above the University's assets of about SEK 2.4 billion, foundation funds amount to scarcely a tenth of the University's total resources.

UMEÅ UNIVERSITY WILL no longer allow investments in fossil fuels. The investment policy the University follows today stipulates that the University shall not invest in weapons, drugs or pornography, but says nothing about the fossil investments. Now efforts are under way to review the policy so that it explicitly states that no investments into fossil fuels may be made, a project that is expected to be complete in June 2017.

"It's important that we can be responsible for the investments we make, that they are safe and ethically sound," says Per Ragnarsson. ●

READ MORE ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN:

<http://gofossilfree.org/se/>



Three perspectives on

A halving of the admitted doctoral students between 2012 and 2015 made the University Board order an internal investigation. In 2016, the trend had reversed, but to all appearances, a heightened financial pressure and more strict quality targets will characterise the nearest future. Aktum has looked into the numbers and talked to responsible parties, and in particular those involved: our doctoral students.

TEXT: Mattias Grundström Mitz **PHOTO:** Johan Gunséus



doctoral student life

TORA DUNÅS, JAKUB Krzywda and Per Boström are doctoral students at Umeå University, but at different faculties and with varying backgrounds. The journey from being a student to a researcher is a feat that unites. However, the prerequisites – including everything from supervision and work environment to career prospects – could probably not differ more.

Jakub Krzywda, doctoral student in computer science has 1.5 years until his public defence of the dissertation. Per Boström, doctoral student in linguistics, will also finalise his doctoral studies in 1.5 years. Tora Dunås, medical engineer, only has one more year until she has finished. If everything goes according to plan, that is. Even if doctoral studies often are considered as a safe and already paid-for, four-year form of studies, life as a doctoral student is not just a bed of roses.

“The great advantages of the doctoral education is that I have an employment with a steady income, relatively good terms of employment and funding for my research studies,” says Per Boström.

“It often strikes me what an advantage it is to work and discuss with colleagues on a daily basis what really interests me. I can’t do that in my personal life. There, no one really understands what it is I’m doing. In that way, being a doctoral student really is a privilege to me.”

Even if doctoral studies are limited to four years, and are prolonged on a yearly basis, Per Boström believes the employment agreement is reasonably good. This since doctoral students are not employed as teachers and hence are not really affected by what happens at the departments. Doctoral students have their obvious place and tasks that need to be carried out. Another benefit that doctoral students enjoy is being students as well, and hence have access to perks similar to other students.

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Per Boström, doctoral student in language studies, linguistics

"I'm working on a dissertation in Nordic languages focusing on the word *love* in spoken Swedish, love in metaphors. I started my doctoral studies in 2012, but I've been on parental leave and am active in an association of doctoral candidates, which has taken its time. I'm hoping to complete my doctorate in 1.5 years."



Tora Dunås, doctoral student in medical engineering

"My studies focus on measuring blood-streams in the brain. I'm employed by the Faculty of Medicine, but have a background as an engineer. I took on my doctoral studies in 2013 and have about one year left until my public defence of the dissertation."



Jakub Krzywda, doctoral student in computer science

"In my doctoral studies, I focus on so-called cloud computing. In November, it was three years since I took on my third-cycle studies. In March, I'm planning on holding a licentiate lecture after which I'll have about 1.5 years until finishing my dissertation."

"As I see it, Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries have the best conditions for doctoral students. You're given a salary, which may be low from a Swedish perspective, but high enough to allow for a good life. If I was to study in Poland, where I come from, I'd need both a scholarship and financial support from my parents to manage. So, the situation here is rather advantageous," says Jakub Krzywda.

BUT THERE ARE two sides to the coin. Something that all three mention is that doctoral students neither count as real students nor as real employees. Doctoral students are often caught in the middle. You get invited to some happenings, but not all. Sometimes this has advantages, other times it is a shame. Naturally, it leads to some form of stress for doctoral students, since it is so uncertain where they fit in. This is particularly tricky to international doctoral students, according to Jakub Krzywda.

"The Swedish system is often difficult for foreign students to get to know. For instance, I'm given a much larger responsibility over my studies, whereas in Poland, my supervisor would have told me step by step what to do. In Sweden, my supervisor said already from the start that I was supposed to take the role as his expert within the field I study. It can be scary to many," says Jakub Krzywda.

On the same note, he says that there is a loneliness built into the Swedish doctoral studentship, where expectations to be self-sufficient are high. This can be particularly hard to handle at the beginning. The Swedish system has a built-in requirement for doctoral students to function as independent researchers after completing the degree, and some supervisors therefore want doctoral students to learn the workmanship by themselves.

Tora Dunås agrees, but also points out the huge differences for doctoral students at different faculties.

"I solely work with studies planned together with my supervisor. Even if the study plan has been adjusted along the way, I still knew from day one what to spend the next three years working on; this due to the grant that my supervisor had received from the Swedish Research Council. The choice I had to make was if I was interested or not," says Tora Dunås.

Per Boström has a whole other experience from the Faculty of Arts.

"In my field of linguistics, all options are open. We choose our own subject, specialisation and so on. We rarely take part in large projects with several researchers and doc-

toral students, instead we do our own thing. But much also depends on the supervisor. Some see doctoral students as students who should run everything on their own accord, whereas some want a collaboration where they lead the doctoral student towards his or her degree," says Per Boström.

"When I look back at the research plan that I sketched out at the onset of my doctoral studies, I realise that I've hardly done any of the original plan. My research has simply led me on other routes."

Does your supervisor understand your research?

"For the most part. She hasn't studied exactly the same, but she works within the same research domain. I also have assistant supervisors who are more knowledgeable in the metaphors I work with, so they complement each other well. I'm happy to have such good supervisors, but I know that all doctoral students aren't as lucky," says Per Boström.

What are doctoral students' major concerns regarding supervisors?

"At the Faculty of Medicine, some doctoral students have a hard time getting hold of their supervisors, particularly those active in medical professions. Sometimes, they can be without a supervisor for weeks or months. The supervisor may reply to emails, but haven't got time to read material. As a doctoral student working on a manuscript, you get rather left out," says Tora Dunås.

ANOTHER CHALLENGE MENTIONED is that many supervisors are in need of further grants and therefore focus a lot of their time on such applications. Holidays and parental leaves are other factors that make supervisors difficult to reach and may be a hindrance in the contact between doctoral student and supervisor.

Per, Tora and Jakub also recount shocking examples where supervisors have shown extremely little interest in their doctoral students. The students have been expected to do everything by themselves, including planning their own work. In some cases, supervisors have several doctoral students, which limits the time spent on each student. But the problem is also the reversed.

"It's not always an advantage to be the only doctoral student. In a group with several doctoral students, at least you have the opportunity to seek support from each other, which can help your everyday. I was very lonely at the beginning of my doctoral studies, but the group has gradually grown and that's made things easier," says Tora Dunås.



The conversation about the doctoral situation is made in the Professor meeting room — the same room used when the University Board holds their meetings.

Even if the basic conditions for doctoral students are the same for everyone, Tora, Per and Jakub still see huge differences that partly depend on differences in traditions and conditions for funding at the various faculties.

Some doctoral students work on external projects and hence have external funding, all the while others, particularly in arts and humanities, are fully funded by the faculty.

“In humanities, 15–20 doctoral students are accepted every other year. When I was admitted, there were a few vacant positions in various subject fields at our faculty. At that point, us newly admitted students formed a small group that has stayed in touch,” says Per Boström.

The doctoral students sign a one-year employment agreement. This is usually alright, but sometimes it causes problems. For a doctoral student who signs a new agreement in May, planning the summer holidays becomes difficult, since you are simply not in the system until the agreement has been signed. In other cases, employments have ceased during holidays, which has meant that doctoral students have not been allowed into the premises upon their return and access to their emails has temporarily been denied.

JUST LIKE IN THE REST of the population, doctoral students can suffer from ill health, and among them, psychiatric diagnoses are

increasing. At the University, this first and foremost concerns symptoms of stress and being overloaded. In statistics from occupational health care services, women over the age of 30 are overrepresented, and so are doctoral students. Although, this does not surprise Tora, Per and Jakub.

“It’s naturally very sad that this negative trend is underway, but it also reflects the rest of society. Among doctoral students, a majority of the women are at a childbearing age. At the same time, women generally take a greater responsibility for children, the household and the family than men. Combining family life with doctoral studies can therefore be really tough, particularly if you’re unlucky with your research projects, supervisor and so on,” says Tora Dunås.

On the same note, Per Boström mentions another problem. Doctoral students do not automatically get their doctoral studentships

extended due to short sick leaves. In order to extend your time after a sick leave, the doctoral student needs to turn to the head of department, who is authorised to make such a call.

“This is an important reason to why many doctoral students work although they are sick or ill, which is a well-known fact. Some universities have changed their routines to make short sick leave absence automatically prolong the doctoral studentship, but this is still not the case in Umeå. From a doctoral students’ union perspective, it’s an important issue to solve,” says Per Boström.

Umeå University has fewer doctoral students now than before, some even speak of a crisis. What would you say?

“It’s difficult to have a definite impression or explanation to this, but from 2015, the departments had to pay for their doctoral

“It’s not always an advantage to be the only doctoral student. In a group with several doctoral students, at least you have the opportunity to seek support from each other, which can help your everyday.”

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students' salaries already from day one – previously they could give a period of doctoral grants. Many researchers are therefore complaining about how expensive doctoral students are becoming, which is awkward for us to hear. Some say they'd rather pay for a post doc who is more self-sufficient than a doctoral student, but I'm not sure if this happens in practice," says Tora Dunås.

"To us at the Faculty of Arts, the problem is rather that we have no post doc positions. Since the doctoral students start and finish together, we also disappear in groups. This year, five or ten of us will defend dissertations and leave, which negatively affects the entire operations," says Per Boström.

"Another issue is that we don't know what to do after our dissertation defences if there are no post doc positions to apply to," continues Per Boström.

He describes the future prospects of finding work as grim, to him and many of his colleagues alike, since there is no industry or private business sector to turn to. This differs greatly from the situation for doctoral students in medicine, technology and science, and some of the social sciences.

"In my case, we're probably dealing with an 'unemployed academic' after the dissertation," says Per Boström half seriously, half-jokingly.

For Jakub Krzywda, the situation is entirely different since getting a job in the IT field is rather easy:

"To me, the tricky part is not getting a job, it's rather figuring out what I want to do. In computer science, the industry is always a backup. What's peculiar, however, is that a doctoral degree can limit your opportunities to find a job as you can easily be seen as overqualified. But there are also private research institutes to turn to where higher qualifications are required, and there's also the academic community."

Just like for Jakub, Tora has a bright future ahead of her on the labour market. She has already set her goal.

"I definitely want to stay within the academia and after completing my doctoral studies, I'm planning on applying for an international post doc in the US. After that, I'd like to live and work in Stockholm for a while before deciding where to settle down," says Tora Dunås. ●

Declining number –

In a few years, the number of new admitted doctoral students at Umeå University has halved. Vice-Chancellor Hans Adolfsson is following the development but does not consider it a crisis.



PHOTO: ULRIKA BERGFORS

Kristina Sehlin MacNeil announced the date of the defence of her dissertation in ethnology at the University Library in February 2017. In 2016, Umeå University had 175 new doctors. Even if the number of admitted doctoral students has declined since 2015, the number of doctoral degrees has been rather stable from year to year with a slight dip in 2014.

— still no crisis

THE STATISTICS MAY seem dramatic.

From 2011 to 2015, the number of doctoral students admitted at Umeå University dropped by 48 percent. This ranked Umeå along with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences to the universities with the largest decrease in Sweden. Compared with the peak in 2012, the reduction is even greater – more than half – from 254 in 2012 to 120 admitted doctoral students in 2015.

“A fluctuation in the number of newly admitted doctoral students is natural,” says Hans Adolfsson, Vice-Chancellor of Umeå University. “There is no explicit plan for the number of doctoral students admitted, instead admissions are governed entirely by research operations’ needs and funds.”

ADMISSIONS OF DOCTORAL students decreased at most universities and colleges in Sweden during the 2011–2015 period – albeit less than at Umeå – with the exception of a few specialised institutions. One such exception is Luleå University of Technology, which increased so sharply that Luleå surpassed Umeå University in the number of new doctoral students.

Lund University has the most new doctoral students in the country. In 2015, 484 new doctoral students were admitted there, four times as many as at Umeå.

The Umeå University Board has noted the decline and in a report sought explanations and comparisons within the University and across the nation. The Board has commissioned the Vice-Chancellor to investigate and report later in the year.

“Among the reasons for the decrease are modified forms of funding for education at doctoral level, where we to a large extent have only doctoral studentships today,” says

Hans Adolfsson. “As a result, Sweden has probably the world’s most expensive doctoral education.”

All faculties have diminished, but the explanations for this differ somewhat. The Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences maintain that the decline in large part has to do with the resources and cost trends that have taken place. The faculties allocate appropriations among their departments. Previously the division was done partly based on the number of doctoral degrees, but that model has given way to allocation of resources according to needs and based on publications.

“However, the five-year comparison is misleading,” says Thomas Pettersson, research coordinator at the Faculty of Social Sciences. “In the 2011–2012 period, our faculty admitted a record number of new doctoral students because of temporary initiatives aimed at doctoral student recruitment. Now we are at a more average level if you look a few additional years back in time.”

At the Faculty of Medicine, the problem is that the decline is unevenly distributed and primarily affects pre-clinical subjects and public health, while the number of clinical subject specialisations is increasing. The Faculty of Science and Technology has at times had few applicants for doctoral studentships and is planning initiatives to reach more interested candidates through social media and other channels. Both the Faculty of Medicine and Science and Technology take the number of doctoral degrees into account as a factor in the allocation of money to departments.

IN 2016 THERE was a slight recovery, with 149 admitted doctoral students, but the level is still far below that of 2011–2012. The reality, however, is more complex than just

the figures that seem so eye-catching. The total number of doctoral students has not declined as sharply as the number of newly admitted ones. As it takes a doctoral student at least four years to complete the degree, a few years will pass before a lower admission has an impact, and dips in some years can be compensated by peaks in others.

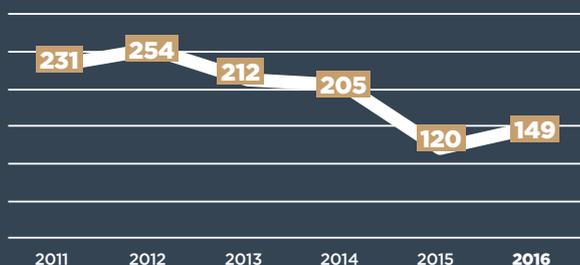
Although the total number of doctoral studentships is now one-fourth less than in 2011, the total employment costs have increased. Of course, that is good news for the doctoral students themselves, who have pocketed more money, though without living in luxury on that account (starting salary for a doctoral student is currently SEK 26,000 a month, with a final salary of 30,000). For the university employing them, on the other hand, this has not been compensated by a corresponding increase in appropriations and therefore must be recouped somewhere.

WE ARE ALSO seeing a tendency for departments and projects to hire postgraduates who have already received their degrees instead of doctoral students. The increase in postdoctoral appointments during the period is of a magnitude well in line with the decrease in doctoral students. It is primarily the researcher and principal research engineer job categories that have increased.

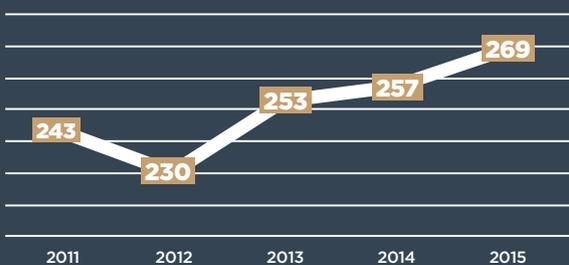
“It’s natural that more postgraduates are being hired when doctoral studentships cost more,” says Hans Adolfsson. “From a supervisor’s perspective, oftentimes the need for someone who can carry out the research study is most important, and in that case it may be justified to instead hire postgraduates who are more experienced and require less supervision.” ●

OLA NILSSON

Admitted doctoral students at Umeå University 2011–2016



Total staff and payroll costs for doctoral studentships, MSEK



Doctoral programmes under the microscope

In 2017, six doctoral programmes at Umeå University are being evaluated. The evaluation involves a lot of work for the departments, but no extra resources have been allotted.

“THE EVALUATION PROVIDES an opportunity to look inwards with the eyes of an outsider and to reflect on the quality of our work. That in itself can promote quality improvement,” says Dieter Müller, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Umeå University, who is responsible for doctoral programmes in the humanities and social sciences.

The doctoral programmes at Umeå University to be evaluated in 2017 are computer science, economics, education, psychology, history and architecture. 2018 promises to be a somewhat quieter year, when only literary history and design will be subjected to the process.

It is the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) that will evaluate the doctoral programmes on the government’s behalf. During a six-year period, UKÄ will review about a third of the country’s 900 doctoral programmes at 29 higher education institutions.

The evaluation is done by an independent assessment group consisting of relevant subject matter experts from both Sweden and other Nordic countries, as well as representatives of the labour market and student representatives. The departments are performing a self-evaluation of the programmes and responding to a large number of questions based on a dossier with everything from general study plans to individual plans for each student. The assessment group is also conducting web interviews with representatives of the University and doctoral students from the programmes under review. The group then will release an opinion according to a two-grade scale, where the programme is judged to have either good or questionable quality.

“There will be lots of work for colleagues who already have their hands full. But we have procedures for evaluation work, so we can handle it,” says Dieter Müller.

If the quality is judged to be good, of course, everything is just fine. However, if the quality is seen as questionable, the University has one year to remedy the shortcomings. UKÄ then determines whether the measures are considered sufficient to raise the assessment to good quality. Otherwise, the university’s degree-awarding powers for the programme are revoked.



PHOTO: JOHAN GUNSEUS

Maria Nordin is senior lecturer at the Department of Psychology and coordinator of the evaluation in the research subject psychology.

IT IS THE FIRST time a joint evaluation of the nation’s doctoral programmes is being conducted. A similar evaluation of first-cycle courses and study programmes was completed in 2014. As far as Umeå is concerned, most of these courses and programmes received a stamp of approval. However, the quality of some was questioned, which led to various measures that ultimately elevated the quality to *good*. The University decided on its own to discontinue three programmes that were considered of questionable quality.

“UKÄ seems to have heeded criticism of the evaluation of first-cycle courses and study programmes,” says Dieter Müller.

“Now there is a greater focus on the process of quality assurance itself than on individual study results. It’s rather about ways to become better than to fail programmes.”

ONE OF THE third-cycle subject areas that will be evaluated in 2017 is psychology. At Umeå University, Maria Nordin at the Department of Psychology is the one who is coordinating the evaluation.

Earlier this year, she responded to the UKÄ self-evaluation that has passed several internal instances before it will be passed onto UKÄ in the middle of March. Also, study plans for current doctoral students and supervisors’ résumés will be submitted, for further autumn interviews by UKÄ.

This far, the work has gone according to plan, suggests Maria Nordin:

“It was tough before we had kicked off, but ever since everything has run really smoothly. The University, the Faculty of Social Sciences and our department have established good structures that correspond well to the targets that are being evaluated.

At the same time, she establishes that the evaluation will also emphasise values that are not as easy to ensure through a structured operational planning:

“Some issues have definitely become an eye-opener. Measuring the quality of supervision is, for instance, really hard to evaluate, but is an incredibly important issue in order to accomplish a good doctoral education,” says Maria Nordin. ●

OLA NILSSON AND JONAS LIDSTRÖM

A forever prioritised group

Statistics from Umeå University show that the number of sick leaves have increased in later years, particularly among female teachers and doctoral students. This due to the high performance often expected of a doctoral student. But the situation can be improved, suggests Catharina Eckeskog who is head of the occupational health care service Feelgood.

Why are doctoral students so vulnerable to becoming sick?

“Doctoral students have always been a prioritised group at Feelgood. There are many reasons for this; for instance the pressure to perform. We often help doctoral students find a balance between demand for performance and looking after their own health and well-being, because the demands for achievement are rather high. And they’re also supposed to perform for a long time. They work long-term towards results that may not show until five years later. That generally makes it hard to know how you’re

getting on. They go into a bubble and become one with their activities.”

What can the University do to relieve pressure?

“A too high workload can be so many things. It could be quantity, having too much to do. But it could also be many other factors contributing to a feeling of high workload. A tangible advice is to talk about these issues among your departments. Because it’s common that those who come to us think they’re alone in not coping and in experiencing problems,” says Catharina Eckeskog.

EVA JOHANSSON LÖNN



“It took time and most likely a few faux pas to learn the system, to discover the small cultural differences and to find my place.”

From student life in Germany to a mouldy barrack

I SPENT THE MAJORITY of the 1990s as an international doctoral student at Umeå University. The Department of Geography, where I was to do my doctoral studies, was located in the Southern Pavilions, which was basically a euphemism for a number of mouldy barracks built in the 1960s to temporarily house the new University. For different reasons, they stayed there until they gave room to the Iksu beach volleyball courts. The location was isolating, particularly in the winter. In order to get to the library, a thick winter coat and a refreshing walk was required along a route that later became the Technology Building and the MIT Building.

THE ISOLATION INITIALLY stretched further than the geographical positioning, as it also concerned the social situation. The Department was small, split between physical and human geography, and had very few doctoral students. In human geography, I turned out to be the only doctoral student (among few) who was neither married nor had small children. This obviously led to scarce chances of going on pub crawls with fellow students, which I had become accustomed to in Germany. These social gatherings were instead replaced by lonely nights in front of the TV and a fair few working nights at the office in the absence of other alternatives.

Despite that, everyone at the Department was really pleasant to their German colleague. People spoke Swedish and I contributed with my own language variant, which felt better than the alternative; staying silent to avoid making mistakes. But it took time

and most likely a few faux pas to learn the system, to discover the small cultural differences and to find my place at a department at a Swedish university. The social isolation was broken by a doctoral student in physical geography, who took me under his wing. Twenty-five years later, I still find some of my best friends in that group.

TODAY, I'M REALLY grateful for my experiences in the 1990s. I was fortunate to get into a very good department with many sweet colleagues who in various ways contributed to me now calling this home. The step going from Germany to Sweden isn't huge, and we know that many of our international doctoral students today probably experience much larger cultural clashes. They also meet a system that is far more focused on success and with explicit time frames for the doctoral education these days. They probably get the impression that their presence, being immigrants, is questioned by some people in Sweden.

In the light of these facts, I find it important to safeguard our international members of staff, and take good care of our doctoral students in particular. They represent current and future networks, and contribute to strengthening the quality of both research and education. ●

DIETER MÜLLER
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

“I'm impressed with the great breadth that Umeå University is displaying. When the media portrays the Arctic, they mention climate and environmental research, but Kunskapsnoden has shown that there is so much more as well.”

Secretary of the Ministry, **Rolf Carman**, (on the left in the photo) participated in a conversation at Kunskapsnoden 2017.



“I'm a geographer, and my education included some physical geography. Therefore, I'm aware that the Arctic as a homogenous region is delimited by a tree line, permafrost, isotherms or the Arctic Circle.”

Dieter Müller about the definition of Arctic research from blogg.umu.se/ledningsbloggen (In Swedish).



A bird's eye on digital revolution

Pelle Snickars is a professor at Humlab, and one of the most prominent media theorists in Sweden. When politics finds itself wedged in a short-sighted corner, he goes for a wider view where digital cultural heritage, intellectual property rights and user data are key issues.

TEXT: Michael Nordvall PHOTO: Mattias Pettersson

PELLE SNICKARS is somewhat of a difficult character to pinpoint. He lives in Stockholm and commutes on a weekly basis to his work as a professor at Humlab in Umeå. Additionally, he also has an apartment in Berlin, where he recently completed a visiting professorship at the Humboldt University.

HOLDING THE INTERVIEW over Skype is particularly appropriate considering Pelle Snickars is a researcher involved with terms like *data housekeeping*, *digitalism* and *digital learning*. And who is about to, after a flying visit to Umeå, continue to Rome.

“Actually, I haven’t been able to entice my wife to come with me to Umeå yet. She is running an architectural firm in Stockholm, so she’s currently the one setting the family agenda. Our two girls aren’t thrilled about seeing me go so often either, but the weekly commute to Umeå is fine,” says Pelle Snickars, who still gets the chance to spend some time at home as he has an ongoing research project in collaboration with cultural heri-

tage institutes in Stockholm. Previously with the National Library of Sweden and the Swedish Film Institute, and now with the Swedish National Museum of Science and Technology.

‘**SLIGHT HIPSTER WARNING**’, is his description of his Berlin apartment, and that is because he has been an inveterate ‘Berliner’ ever since his postdoc at the Technical University of Berlin at the start of the 21st century.

Having grown up in Täby, in Stockholm, he took on studies in economic history at Stockholm University in the early 1990s to then carry on with general literary studies and ideas studies.

“The plan was to carry on with studies in history of ideas – I wrote incomprehensible essays about the late Wittgenstein and the Unspeakable – but I needed an extra subject for my degree. I ended up choosing film science, and after that, I stayed at the Film House at the Swedish Film Institute, where I wrote a dissertation on early Swedish film and visual pop culture around the 1900s. Only once, I ran into Swedish film legend Ingmar Bergman.”

“The handling of user data is already a multi-billion industry.”



Pelle Snickars

Age: 45 years.

Does: Professor at the Department of Culture and Media Studies and Humlab.

Hobbies: The family, reading and weightlifting (on a good day, I can bench press 100 kg).

Latest book-read: Currently, lots of American content: Colson Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (about slavery and a successful flight) + John Williams' *Butcher's Crossing* (about a badly executed buffalo hunt).

Last seen on TV or film: *Manchester by the Sea* (about male crises).

Listens to: Melanie De Biasio (captivating Belgian Electro Noir Jazz).

AFTER COMPLETING HIS dissertation, Pelle Snickars took a job at the National Archive for Recorded Sound and Moving Images (SLBA), which joined with the National Library of Sweden's archive in 2009. They had been two institutes governed by Swedish law to have mandatory copies of practically everything, but were finding it increasingly difficult to handle the growing abundance of multimedia.

"There was a long discussion over the difficulty in keeping the media separate. Already in the mid-1970s, Harry Schein, the then Swedish Film Institute CEO, inquired a cohesive political approach to the area, this instead of yet another film, mass media or press subsidy investigation. Dividing media politics between various departments makes it difficult for the Government to react," says Pelle Snickars. "To some, this is first and foremost interesting in theory, but for me, it was the archivist's perspective that struck a note."

Can we receive and archive the huge amount of information produced? Also the enormous data files created by HD-TV, reality shows and adds? Is it even feasible?

"No, we can't. Often, people think that what is *laid down by law* is a good guarantee that nothing will disappear, but it can also cause problems," suggests Pelle Snickars and highlights the paradox.

ARCHIVES HAVE NEVER saved everything, elimination is key. Without elimination, the law becomes a millstone round cultural institutes' necks that forces them to follow the law, but as a result will not afford to put resources on what is relevant at present, such as for instance blogs and YouTube videos.

"The cultural heritage we end up with is implications of political calls that are unable to handle an escalating technological happening. Unfortunately, discussions on digital material are few, despite being such an important topic not least for research in arts and humanities, and social sciences. How will we interpret our past time in a hundred years?"

What has resulted in more discussion is the crisis in the private media business, at the same time as Swedish Television invests a lot into web material. Still, the directives of the governmental Media Inquiry did not include looking into public service.

"That was kind of odd. So, the Government adds nine billion SEK in media subsidies, of which eight go to public service – but they weren't included in the Media Inquiry. When the media industry – which really and truly is a lobby organisation – got in touch, I found political bodies cowardly for not having handled it," says Pelle Snickars.

But the Media Inquiry did not take kindly to the same researcher partaking in both the governmental investigation and the parallel *trade commission of public service*.

THAT IS WHY, in the end, he is listed as co-author 'only' in the industry funded public service commission. A report that among all suggests reducing support to public service institutes in aid of a public service fund, to which others can apply.

"That's actually similar to a proposal in the Media Inquiry, so I have no issue in supporting it, although it's

rather 'uninstitutional'. Already at present, loads of programmes on Swedish public service TV and radio are produced by commercial companies. A suggestion would for instance be to expand digital services for on-demand media consumption with lots of more material."

Pelle Snickars makes a comparison to a library; is it primarily a *premise* or a *function*? Is public service a number of institutions housed in a few closely situated buildings in the Swedish capital – or a function that the citizens should be granted access to?

GOING FROM WELL-DEFINED media types such as a newspaper or a broadcast media channel to a more diversified and personalised accumulation of content causes problems – which Snickars' contribution to the Media Inquiry bears witness of.

"The original idea derived from the web critic Evgenij Morosov, namely the view of user data as *capital*. We consume an increasing array of intellectual products – streamed music, web news, etc. – and it's reasonable to think that the use will only increase. The handling of user data is already a multi-billion industry."

HOW DO WE CITIZENS gain power over our user data? Pelle Snickars draws parallels to the conflict between environment and growth.

"It's a paradox: How can new companies and services develop with increasing restrictions? And if everyone disconnects, we have no development to speak of."

On the other hand, development might take us somewhere completely unexpected. The Internet may not have been that silver lining we had all hoped for.

"I've always seen the volatile abundance of the information universe as an opportunity. It might develop into something else; 'the malignant Internet', through which we can never reach each other? Although, trying to solve the problem through governmental regulations is probably not feasible. With a humanities view on things, it's also to be expected that issues will be complicated. It's often difficult, even to the researcher, to establish what is right."

PELLE SNICKARS WORKS full time with research. With several large research projects, project management, carrying out own research, and supervising doctoral students, his time has not allowed for education on undergraduate level, although he would have liked to.

The fact that his workplace Humlab over the last few years has gone through a number of changes, resulting in a more narrow focus on research, has not disrupted Pelle Snickars' ongoing projects.

"On the contrary, Humlab is and will no doubt be the best Swedish environment for research in digital humanities and was the main reason I wanted to come to Umeå University. The infrastructure is amazing – and the developers and programmers are even better. Technologically oriented scholars in Arts and Humanities in Sweden would give their lives to have the equivalent of Humlab. And Umeå University has two!" ●

Setting up and keeping a good archive is something many departments could get better at. Study administrator **Ellinor Gustafsson** has taken on the archive at the Department of Social Work.

TEXT Jonas Lidström

1 What needs archiving at a department and why?

“An archive should mirror the business of a department. By looking through the archive, you should get a good picture of the work in progress over the years. The archive should store everything from the researchers’ primary data to student timetables.”

2 A well-ordered archive is expected at a department. Why are there still so many shortages?

“There’s a lack of understanding and interest: many administrators that I’ve spoken to have just had the task land on their desks, but no time to carry out the work. Other than that, many people don’t know enough about how to do it. Heads of department and managements may not realise the scope of the work and hence don’t set clear demands on performing the work. Some probably just assume that everything is working as it should.”

3 How can one resolve the situation?

“We need to take it seriously. This is a governmental authority, and it should be a non-issue. We should for instance be allowed to use electronic archiving systems at departments as well, and not just be forced to use Excel sheets. Offering more training sessions in basic archiving would be appreciated. So much takes place electronically these days, and hence you should be able to store documents electronically in the long term. The University has no such system and as far as I’ve heard, there’s no plan for one either.”

4 What advice can you give to a department with non-functional archiving routines?

“Don’t fool yourself into thinking you can give someone the task to ‘sort out the archive once and for all’. Even if an external resource comes in, you need someone at the department to be responsible for maintaining the archive later on. Since 2014, we have a new classification system that is also more time-consuming than before.”



“We need to take it seriously. This is an authority, and it should be a non-issue.”

5 Where does your archiving commitment come from?

“Many people find archiving boring, but only because they don’t see the bigger picture. I’ve taken courses in archives and information science, so I understand the idea behind the system. But there’s still loads

that I’ve had to figure out by myself. And the more I learn, the more opportunities I see for creating something that functions so much better.” ●



Tapio Alakörkkö and Karl Johan Bonnedahl in conversation with Lena Söderlind Pettersson from Leia business hotel.

Facts on AIMday

AIMday was developed at Uppsala University in 2008, and matches questions from companies and organisations with competent researchers willing to take part. The parties meet during an hour-long session led by a host, and at a follow-up meeting a month later. In 2017, several AIMdays will be organised in Umeå. The first one is AIMday Tourism on 21 March.

<http://aimday.se/>

<http://www.umu.se/om-universitetet/aktuellt/kalendarium/visningssida/?eventVersionId=21471>



Karl Johan Bonnedahl.



AIMday on 16 November 2016 dealt with social innovation. Nine companies and twenty researchers met in the University Liaison Building to discuss challenges, the future and solutions.

“The University must be a searching and critical voice in society.”



New way of applying research

Increased collaboration between researchers and the business sector is in steady demand from political bodies. But what do researchers get out of collaborating? Aktum has talked to researchers and companies who participated in AIMday last autumn.

TEXT: Jessica Larsson Svanlund **PHOTO:** Mattias Pettersson

AIMDAY IS A concept for collaboration that connects issues from companies, associations and organisations with researchers. So far, Umeå

University has hosted AIMday twice.

“The University core operations are education and research of high quality, and collaboration is one way of further strengthening it and putting research into good use,” says Tapio Alakörkkö at the External Relations Office.

“Collaborations with the surrounding society, nationally and globally, can also help attract students, increase the quality of education and provide researchers with the chance to make empirical studies and gain access to a test arena,” he says and adds:

“One of the benefits of AIMday is that it’s a scientifically proven method.”

THE LAST AIMDAY was arranged in November 2016 on social innovation. One participating company was the business hotel Leia Företagshotell in Umeå that wanted help with packaging and finding customers for a project that aims to help long-term unemployed back into occupation.

Tapio Alakörkkö and Karl Johan Bonnedahl, associate professor at the Umeå School of Business and Economics, addressed the company’s issues.

“It’s always interesting to be putting

things into practice. When studying a subject, both theory and practical use is necessary – not just give others something, but really test one’s thoughts. There’s never a dialogue if both parties come with set solutions,” says Karl Johan Bonnedahl.

LENA SÖDERLIND PETTERSSON, business hotel manager at Leia, is pleased with the results.

“We work through coaching and it is self-evident to try this new model. We gained new perspective on our business that emphasised the importance of solving current issues and it confirmed some of our ideas. We were given tangible suggestions on how to move forward, but also new ideas and contacts,” says Lena Söderlind Pettersson.

The AIMday concept is in line with the higher education political focus on collaboration and utilisation. In a press release on the research policy bill *Collaborating for knowledge – for society’s challenges and strengthened competitiveness* it was said that ‘the objective of the research policy was for Sweden to be one of the world’s foremost research and innovation countries and a leading knowledge nation’.

The minister in charge, Helene Hellmark Knutsson, was quoted: “The idea is increased collaboration among higher education institutions, the business sector and society as a whole with the aim of meeting our major societal challenges and strengthening our competitiveness.”

Researcher Karl Johan Bonnedahl finds AIMday to be a very good initiative, with certain reservations.

“At AIMday, businesses and their challenges is the starting point. As a researcher you take on a more consultative role. But seeing that the University has a huge amount of resources that are underutilised in society, all initiatives that strive towards extended collaborations are welcome.”

THERE ARE ALSO RISKS with collaboration, according to Karl Johan Bonnedahl. The University and researchers cannot be defined by company needs or political targets:

“It’s important for the University operations to be applied in practise, but how it’s profitable to the community is not always clear. The University must be a searching and critical voice in society, which is particularly important in contexts where the entire University operations may seem to be about providing young people with jobs and add to the growth of companies. That’s when things have gone wrong.”

“The connections to society need to be expanded upon. We can’t stare blindly at one form of good use – use can also be to question things. Becoming a subcontractor of given societal targets, set by politicians, or if worst comes to worst, by blurred market objectives, would make us ruled by the wrong forces,” he concludes. ●

A festival honouring literature

On 16–18 March, the eleventh edition of the international literature festival — Littfest — takes place in Umeå. Thousands of people from near and far get to experience literature in various forms at Umeå Folkets Hus, the book café at Pilgatan — and at Bildmuseet.

“THIS WILL BE THE sixth time we cooperate with the Snöbollen Award, the award for the Swedish Picture Book of the Year,” says Brita Täljedal, curator at Bildmuseet contemporary art museum in Umeå.

This year, the prize will go to the book *Djur som ingen sett utom vi* (‘Animals that no one has seen but us’) by children’s book author Ulf Stark and illustrator Linda Bondestam, who by the way lives in Helsinki.

And speaking of which, Finland is actually celebrating 100 years of independence, and deserves being celebrated at the festival. This year’s theme is identity – a word associated to biographies, diaries, memoirs, translations, languages and cultures.

THIS YEAR IN PARTICULAR, the collaboration between Littfest and Bildmuseet has been developed upon as the majority of the poetry elements of the programme has been moved to the museum; in the green exhibition room Crystal Palace, to be precise. This room is also a part of the nuclear exhibition Perpetual Uncertainty.

“Our poetry elements have struggled at

Folkets Hus. Those premises are better suited for events that attract thousands of people to the Idun theatre, but creating the personal and devoted atmosphere needed for poetry has been more difficult. We are also using the entire Bildmuseet building; welcoming guests, serving food, holding exhibitions and parties,” says Erik Jonsson, coordinator of Littfest, and Brita Täljedal adds that they have come up with a win-win solution.

“We are both looking at expanding our audiences.”

Scheduling poetry sessions to the evenings is also a conscious decision, in tune with the ambition to widen the festival.

“A traditional Swedish literature festival runs a daytime programme from 8–16, but it is more common abroad to schedule events from afternoon until midnight. Foreign guests are also in shock over us not even drinking wine whilst listening to poetry!” continues Erik Jonsson.

DESPITE A STEADILY increasing audience, he still believes that it will be difficult to grow with the current aim of the festival. On

the other hand, he would like to see a widened collaboration with Umeå University.

“So far, a fair few individual researchers from the University have participated, often as appreciated hosts in talks and debates. But there ought to be more synergy effects to make use of,” says Erik Jonsson.

HE DESCRIBES HOW the opening Thursday could become a forum for both non-fiction, research and popular science: open to everyone, but with a special focus on librarians, teachers and other researchers.

“And it shouldn’t at all be limited to literary scholars. Last year, Mattias Gardell and Gellert Tamas visited us together with Umeå-researcher Lena Berggren. She is the leading researcher on Nazism in Sweden. This year, religious scientist Tomas Lindgren will hold a talk with Åsne Seierstad, and Elza Dunkels takes part in a panel debate about the digital book as a phenomenon,” says Erik Jonsson, and adds:

“Books can deal with the climate, migration ... or anything, really!” ●

MICHAEL NORDVALL

Umeå University Littfest events

THURSDAY 20:30, PILGATAN

Smart, good-looking, angry? About working women in Norrland

Annelie Bränström-Öhman, professor in general literary studies, leads a conversation with authors Katarina Kieri and David Nyman. In Swedish.

FRIDAY 13:00, IDUN

Getting to know radicalisation

Why are young Muslims in the West radicalised? Author Åsne Seierstad, currently in the media with the reporting book *Två systrar*, talks to Tomas Lindgren, professor in psychology of religion. In Norwegian and Swedish.

FRIDAY 11:00. STUDIO N

What is culture worth?

Digitalisation has changed the media industry, but how about books? Elza Dunkels, Department of Applied Educational Science, is one of three experts in the panel. In Swedish.

FRIDAY 15:00, TONSALEN

The story of Pehr Stenbergs life

Fredrik Elgh, professor in clinical microbiology, talks about the giant project about publishing Pehr Stenberg’s 5,000 page diaries.

BILDMUSEET ÄR ETT CENTRUM FÖR
SAMTIDSKONST OCH VISUELL KULTUR,
OCH EN DEL AV UMEÅ UNIVERSITET.

HÄR FÖRSTÄLLS UTSTÄLLNINGAR MED
SAMTIDSKONST OCH INTERNATIONELL KONST
TILLGÄNGLIGA FÖR ALLA MED INTERESS I KUNSKAP
OM KUNSKAP OCH MUSIK

Brita Täljedal, curator at Bildmuseet
and Erik Jonsson, coordinator of
Littfest literature festival.

PHOTO: PER MELANDER

Culture

FROM THE SPRING PROGRAMME OF

Culture on Campus

See the entire spring calendar on:
www.umu.se/kulturpacampus
(press English flag)

PHOTO: PRESS PHOTO



WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 12:10–12:50
Ljusgården, Teacher Education Building
The Tarantula Waltz (concert).
Experimental singer/songwriter who has
worked with The Tallest Man On Earth.

PHOTO: PRESS PHOTO



THURSDAY 27 APRIL 12:10–12:50
Ljusgården, Teacher Education Building
Molnskugga (performance).
Nine women from nine countries read
texts fragments from Swedish poet Tomas
Tranströmer's poems in various languages.

PHOTO: PRESS PHOTO



WEDNESDAY 24 MAY 12:10–12:50
Vardagsrummet, Humanities Building
Maria Sveland (author)
The author talks about her book
"Bitterfittan 2", her debut in 2007 that
has become a feminist contemporary
classic. In Swedish.

FRIDAY 16:00, TONSALEN

Timeless love

Katarina Gregersdotter talks
with Canadian author Marnie
Woodrow about the book
Heyday. In English.

SATURDAY 10:00, TONSALEN

Art and text as political act

Political scientist Malin Rönn-
blom leads a conversation be-
tween artist Gunilla Samberg
and art critic and author Dan
Jönsson. In Swedish.



PHOTO: MATTIAS PETTERSSON

Privileged as a Swede, discriminated against as a Sami

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K **AUTOKEINO, OR GUOAVDAGEAIDNU**, is a village in northern Norway where the Sami culture is completely dominant. This was also the reason why I chose to study Sami at the University of Guoavdageaidnu – something as unique as a Sami university. In addition to the fact that all teaching took place in the Sami language, the entire context had a Sami stamp, from the art exhibits in the premises to the food in the lunchroom.

It was a liberating but at the same time remarkable experience to visit a densely populated area and a higher education institution where Sami is the norm. Here, I could wear my Sami clothes, speak Sami and sing a yoik without attracting attention. In Sweden, there is no equivalent.

SOMETHING THAT BECAME clear to me after my studies in Guoavdageaidnu is the importance of the language. When speaking Sami with native speakers of the language, they talk about different things than when we speak Swedish. Use of the Sami language opens the possibility of expressing Sami identity that otherwise has a subordinate position in everyday life.

“I am immensely privileged as a Swede but discriminated against as a Sami,” my father said many years ago.

That is something I carry with me and agree with. I’m extremely grateful for living in a country like Sweden and to do the work I do. Every morning when I go to work and see the University in front of me, my heart skips a beat!

But my privilege must be used with care. To engage in research is not about looking after my own interests as an individual, but rather about contributing to society with new knowledge that can lead to improvements.

IN MY RESEARCH, I have looked at the curriculum for the Swedish nine-year compulsory school and found that only half a percent of the 800-plus educational targets touches on Sami themes.

At the same time, the Sami are a national minority and recognised as a native people in accordance with fundamental law. Sweden as a nation has obligations to avoid discriminating against the Sami people or assimilating them.

That becomes a difficult equation to solve. Is it possible to avoid assimilation when 99.5% of the compulsory school curriculum lacks a Sami perspective? A difficult question, but one that needs to be posed.

IN MY CULTURE, it is most important to first say where I come from and to what clan I belong. Who I am, as opposed to what I do. Lineage is important because we are a people who have strong ties to our land and who hold this land in trust for the next generation. In 2017, Umeå University is focusing particular attention on Arctic research. But my hope is that the focus will also encompass Sami research and Sápmi.

For me personally, it goes without saying that I feel responsibility towards Sami society. But I would like the University to also shoulder that responsibility in an even more distinct manner.

If our Swedish society is to increase the knowledge base about Sami society, the change must start here, at our university. ●

CHARLOTTA SVONNI

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